

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
February 22, 2006, 4:30 p.m. Council Chambers**

PRESENT

Cindy Felsten
Ian Kohen
Greg Lewis
Jay Myers
Gil Palmer
Chrystal Pushor
John Roberts
Marie Schroeder
Barbara Stevens

ABSENT

Wes Roy
Jason Staley

***** Meeting Called to Order *****

STAFF PRESENT:

Director Arlette Tinsley, Deputy Director Lorraine Smith, Secretary Lula Young.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Commissioner Schroeder called roll. **Commissioner Roberts moved to accept the January minutes as submitted, Commissioner Pushor seconded. Motion carried.**

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Commissioner Felsten reported the January ending balance as \$6,199.02. \$90.00 were disbursed for eighteen students to attend the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (Middle School Youth Summit) leaving a balance of \$6,009.02. Director Tinsley advised that an additional disbursement will be made to cover the expense of the bus.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Tinsley reported on the Mayor's State of the City address. The Mayor's Cultural Awareness Committee was honored with the first ever 'Diversity Award'. One program that was highlighted was the Diversity Training facilitated by Tatiana Kolovou, which was a collaborative effort of the Cultural Awareness Committee with the Human Rights Commission.

Director Tinsley informed Commissioners of several presentations including the East High School ESL and Police Department trainings. Director Tinsley shared with Commissioners the results of the Police training evaluations. Officers submitted positive evaluations and

comments in addition to questions they would like to have answered in future trainings. Several officers requested a one or two-page quick-reference sheet on the various religions highlighting religious sensitivities. Director Tinsley advised she would share the request with the Interfaith Forum.

Director Tinsley reported that she provided a presentation to a class at the CTL (Center for Teaching & Learning), which was a college credit course. The course curriculum she presented was the same training presented to Leadership Bartholomew County.

Director Tinsley advised she also attended a meeting of special service providers who work with the Latino community, facilitated by Laura Hurt. During the meeting, Debbie Thomas advised that BCSC currently has over 600 ESL students, demonstrating a 225% increase in the last three years. The meeting was well-attended by representatives from the hospital and social service agencies. The meeting was initially called as a result of attempted legislation to deny social services and education to certain immigrants. Other issues included immigrant interaction with the BMV, police officers and landlords.

One new case was taken this month, sexual harassment in employment. The case involved a high school student on her first job who was allegedly sexually harassed. Director Tinsley informed commissioners that a third complaint involving predatory lending and housing discrimination based on national origin may be filed soon. Commissioners were advised of the upcoming mediation with Barb Stevens as mediator that would provide an invaluable training opportunity.

Director Tinsley advised that ESL students at East displayed increased interest on any issues related to employment. Additional points of interest and concern relevant to the immigrant students were discussed.

Director Tinsley shared additional activities: Council liaison, Martha Myers is accepting Commissioner applications until February 24th. Deputy Director Smith has been working with Commissioner Stevens on the Lilly Scholarship selection. Director Tinsley updated Commissioners on her work with an East high school student on her Senior project, Ebun Okuleye. The project is a Hate Crimes and Harassment Brochure with a student-based focus. She is coupling that with a paper that is required and a survey. The survey she is using with high school students will measure how much harassment they witness, what kind of harassment, how they respond to harassment both as victims and bystanders. Director Tinsley provided a summary of the survey style and data format that Miss Okuleye will be utilizing. Commissioner Lewis commented that Miss Okuleye is demonstrating the principal and goal of the Senior Project at East High School - that students may find a topic that inspires their passion and make it a culminating expression of their high school experience.

Regarding the discussion on hate crimes and Director Tinsley's reference to hate crimes against the Amish, Commissioner Roberts offered a video reference regarding clapping, a hate crime against the Amish. He stated that, "A Stoning in Fulham County," tells a story of clapping and how prevalent it is in communities where Amish settle.

Chairperson Palmer requested additional feedback surrounding the police department training evaluations. Additional discussion ensued.

OPEN FORUM/DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Myers congratulated Commissioner Lewis on ten successful years of portraying various presidents on President's Day in the local schools.

Commissioner Roberts announced, "One book – One Community" open forum book read. Selected books are Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass..

Commissioner Lewis announced a African-American History month event at Central Middle School, a 'Blues Project' and an all eighth grade concert with students and faculty on Friday, February 24, 2006.

Commissioner Palmer announced a poetry reading at Eastside Community Center, also in honor of Black History Month.

Commissioner Roberts announced a Black History Program at Calvary Community Church on Sunday, February, 26th, at 4:00 p.m.

Commissioner Myers announced a free community calendar and 'Ask the Expert' sections online at www.therepublic.com.

FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION:

Chairperson Palmer opened nominations from the floor. There were no nominations from the floor. The slate of officers compiled by the nominating committee was: Gil Palmer as Chairperson, Jay Myers as vice-chair, Greg Lewis as treasurer, and John Roberts as secretary.

Ballots were distributed individually for each office. After voting through written ballots, the executive officers for 2006-2007 are: Chairperson – Gil Palmer, unanimous. Vice-Chair – Jay Myers, unanimous. Treasurer – Greg Lewis, unanimous, Secretary – John Roberts, unanimous. New officers will begin effective April 1, 2006.

ANNUAL DINNER/ESSAY CONTEST:

Commissioner Myers volunteered to distribute Essay/Art contest packets to Youth Hope and the Youth Services Center. Commissioner Lewis volunteered to distribute packets to the high schools.

OTHER BUSINESS – SUBCOMMITTEES:

Deputy Director Smith reviewed the 2006 Sub-committees generated in compliance with the current goals and objectives. Commissioner Roberts signed up to explore the implementation of A. D. L. Diversity training for teachers/educators.

LAWS AWARD:

Commissioner Myers and Felsten reviewed the structure of the 2005 Laws nominating committee and requested that Commissioner Staley be updated on his role as committee chair and the need for him to form the 2006 Laws Award nominating committee.

ADJOURN:

Commissioner Roberts moved to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Felsten seconded. Meeting adjourned.